

MARVEL

#2

**COSTA
SANDOVAL
OLAZABA
ALMARA**

VENOM[®]



YEARS AGO, PETER PARKER (A.K.A. THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN) ACCIDENTALLY BONDED WITH AN ALIEN BEING CALLED A SYMBIOTE. WHEN PETER REALIZED THE COSTUME WAS ACTUALLY AN AGGRESSIVE LIVING ORGANISM, HE REJECTED IT. BUT DURING THEIR TIME TOGETHER, THE SYMBIOTE HAD ACCESS TO SPIDER-MAN'S GENETIC CODE, AND NOW GRANTS WHOMEVER IT BONDS WITH SKILLS SIMILAR TO HIS: WALL-CRAWLING, THE POWER TO GENERATE BIO-ORGANIC WEBBING, AND UNIQUE ABILITIES TO SHAPE-SHIFT AND BECOME INVISIBLE, TURNING THEM INTO...

VENOM



ALTHOUGH THE SYMBIOTE'S PAST EXPERIENCES AND HOSTS HAVE GIVEN IT A FODNESS FOR EARTH AND TAUGHT IT HOW TO BE A HERO, HIS NEW HOST IS BOTH AMBITIOUS AND SELFISH, PUTTING ITS REHABILITATION IN JEOPARDY. LEE IS ALSO DIFFERENT IN THAT INSTEAD OF THE SYMBIOTE CONTROLLING HIM...*HE CAN CONTROL IT.*

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IT WAS WHEN I STEPPED
OFF THE ELEVATOR THAT I
FELT THE COLD FIST IN MY
STOMACH START TO CLENCH.



I'D MANAGED
TO TALK MY WAY
UP TO THE FLOOR.
THAT'S EASIER THAN
YOU'D THINK.



THE **CASE** IS
WHAT GOT ME THE
REST OF THE WAY.



SOMETHING THIS
VALLIABLE OPENS
A LOT OF DOORS.



IT CAN
ALSO GET
YOU KILLED.



SO, THEY
TELL ME THE THING
LAST NIGHT WENT BAD,
AND YOU'RE THE ONLY
ONE WHO MADE IT
OUT ALIVE.

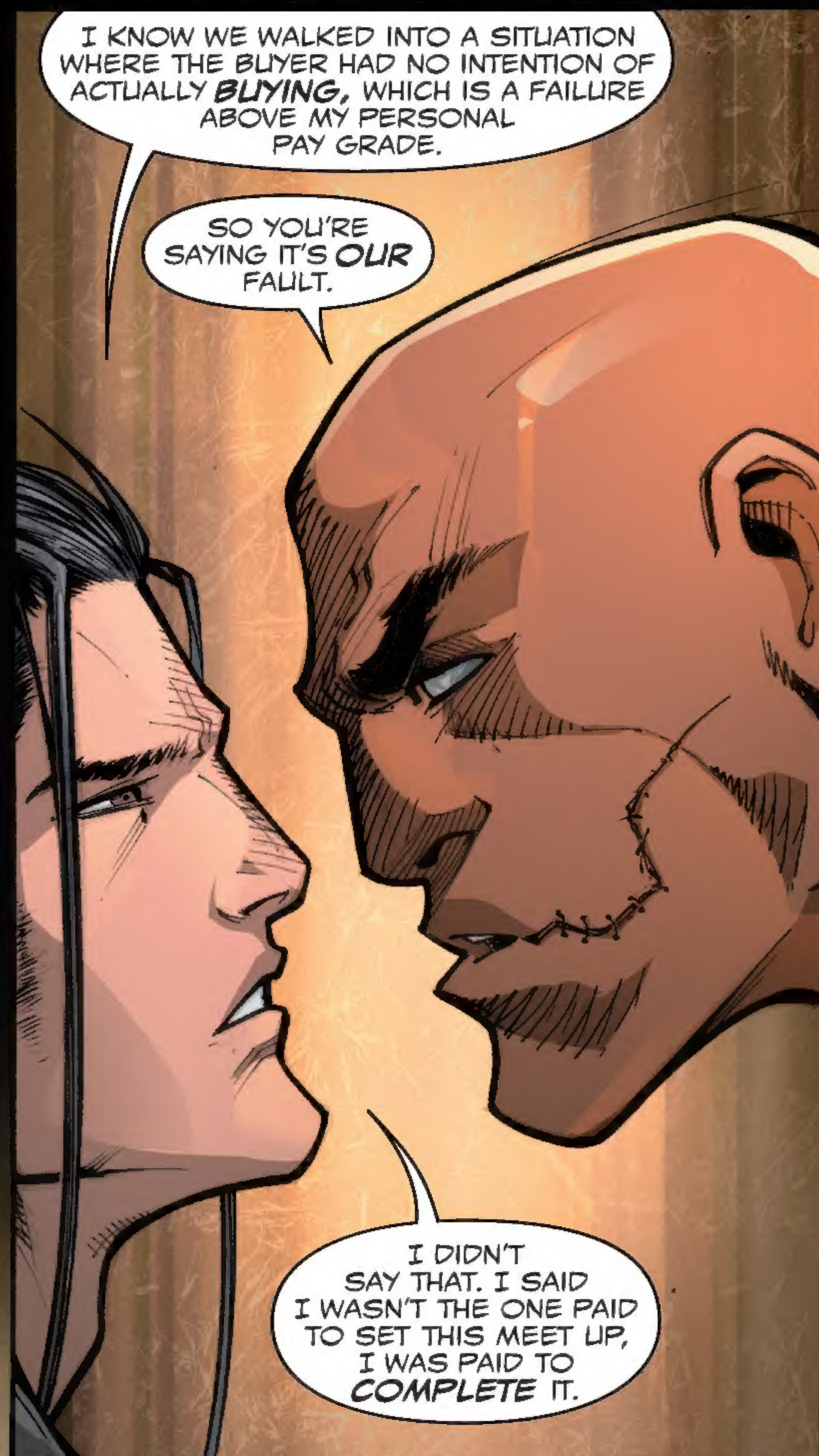


THAT
SOUNDS ABOUT
RIGHT, BLACK
CAT.



"SOUNDS
ABOUT RIGHT"?
YOU WERE **THERE**. YOU
DON'T KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED?

YEAH!



I KNOW WE WALKED INTO A SITUATION
WHERE THE BUYER HAD NO INTENTION OF
ACTUALLY **BUYING**, WHICH IS A FAILURE
ABOVE MY PERSONAL
PAY GRADE.

SO YOU'RE
SAYING IT'S **OUR**
FAULT.

I DIDN'T
SAY THAT. I SAID
I WASN'T THE ONE PAID
TO SET THIS MEET UP,
I WAS PAID TO
COMPLETE IT.



I WASN'T ABLE TO DO
THAT, SO I BROUGHT YOUR
MERCHANDISE BACK
TO YOU.



A DAY
LATER, THOUGH.
WHY DIDN'T YOU GET
WORD TO US RIGHT
AWAY?

HOW WOULD
I HAVE DONE THAT?
MY ONLY CONTACT TO
YOU WAS KILLED IN
THAT ALLEY.

IN THE ALLEY WHERE
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED, AND OUR PEOPLE
ON THE POLICE FORCE TELL
US THAT THOSE MEN DIED
OF SOMETHING **OTHER**
THAN GUNSHOTS.

CARE
TO TELL US WHAT
YOU WERE DOING
ALL NIGHT?

THE NIGHT BEFORE...

I FEEL YOU
INSIDE MY GLITS LIKE
A COLD LUMP...

...BUT I DON'T
HEAR YOU IN
MY HEAD.

ALL RIGHT, YOU
BLACK GOOPY
ALIEN OR
WHATEVER...

WHERE DID
YOU GO?



AH.

THERE
YOU ARE.



YOU.
YOU KILLED
THOSE
MEN.

YUP. AND
YOU **HELPED**.
THEN YOU WENT
DARK ON ME
FOR TWO
HOURS.

IF THAT'S
HOW THIS IS
GOING TO BE,
THAT'S **GOOD
NEWS** FOR
ME.

"RECENTLY."
SO IT WASN'T
LIKE THAT
BEFORE?
YOU'VE LEFT SOME
BODIES ON THE
FLOOR BEFORE,
HAVEN'T
YOU?

A LOT,
I BET.

I WAS...
WEAKENED
FROM MY **ORDEAL**.
AND SENSELESS
VIOLENCE IS, RECENTLY,
HORRIFYING TO
ME. I WAS...
UNPREPARED.


IT'S
NOT LIKE
THAT...

ONE OF
THOSE MEN
WAS YOUR
FRIEND.




I
DON'T HAVE
FRIENDS.

I HAVE
KNOWN MEN LIKE YOU.
HOLLOW. EMPTY OF ANY
SENSE OF HONOR.
YOU ARE EVIL.




AND I HAVE
HAD MY FILL OF
EVIL. I REFUSE TO
PARTICIPATE IN
IT AGAIN.

I'M NOT
SURE YOU HAVE
ANY SAY IN IT.



LITTLE MAN,
WHOM DO YOU THINK
YOU'RE TALKING TO? I'VE
COME FROM THE STARS
AND HAVE WOVEN MYSELF
INTO THE GANGLIA OF
YOUR PARIETAL
LOBE.

JUST
BECAUSE I
WON'T KILL YOU
DOESN'T MEAN
IT IS WISE TO
ANTAGONIZE
ME.



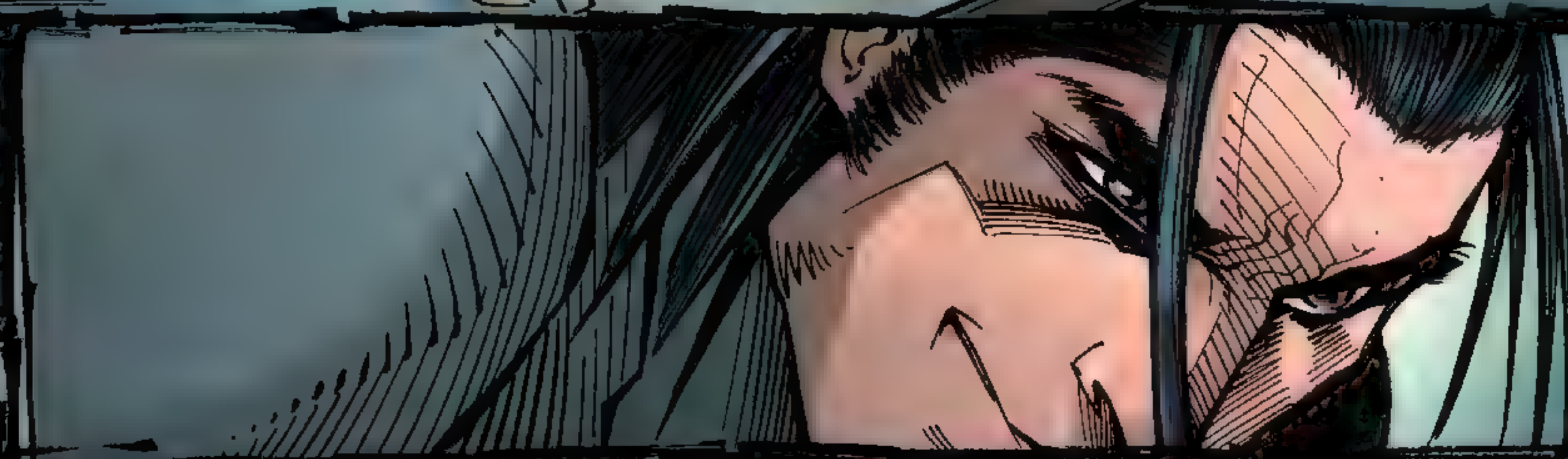
NOT WISE,
HUH?



IT HAS BEEN
SOME TIME SINCE
A HOST ATTEMPTED TO
RESIST. I ASSURE YOU
THIS WILL BE MORE
PAINFUL FOR YOU
THAN ME.


YOU
CONTINUE
TO RESIST?!
HO--

NOW,
LISTEN
UP.




I WAS AN
ARMY RANGER. THEY TRAIN
US IN ALL KINDS OF THINGS--CQC,
DEMOLITIONS, AND OVERCOMING
PSYCHIC INCUSSION.

NOW, WE'RE
GOING TO HAVE
A VERY SERIOUS
CONVERSATION...



...ABOUT
WHO'S ACTUALLY
IN CHARGE
HERE.

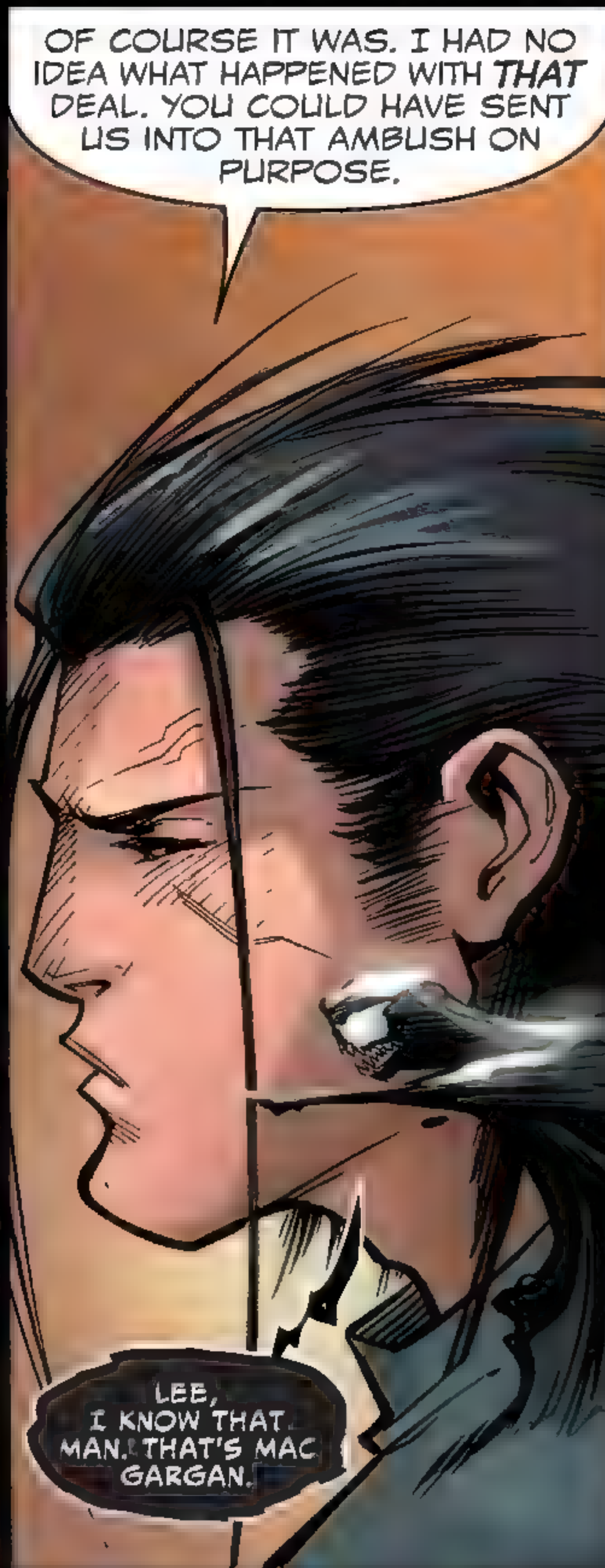


I
SPENT THE NIGHT
THINKING.

NOW.

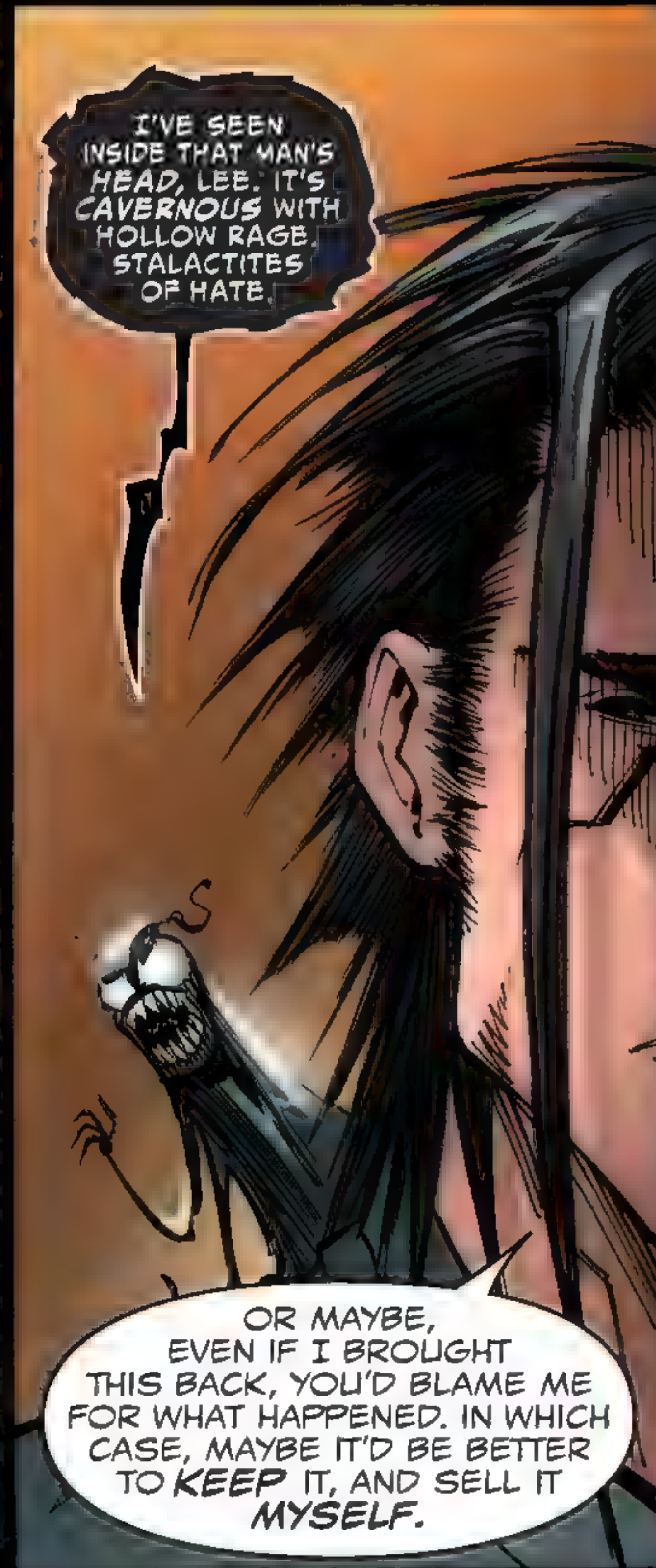


THAT MAKES IT SOUND LIKE YOUR DECISION TO BRING OUR MATERIAL BACK TO US WAS UP IN THE AIR.



OF COURSE IT WAS. I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED WITH *THAT* DEAL. YOU COULD HAVE SENT US INTO THAT AMBUSH ON PURPOSE.

LEE, I KNOW THAT MAN. THAT'S MAC GARGAN.



I'VE SEEN INSIDE THAT MAN'S HEAD, LEE. IT'S CAVERNOUS WITH HOLLOW RAGE STALACTITES OF HATE.

OR MAYBE, EVEN IF I BROUGHT THIS BACK, YOU'D BLAME ME FOR WHAT HAPPENED. IN WHICH CASE, MAYBE IT'D BE BETTER TO KEEP IT, AND SELL IT MYSELF.



REGULAR EINSTEIN OVER HERE, HUH?

SO WHAT TIPPED THE SCALES?



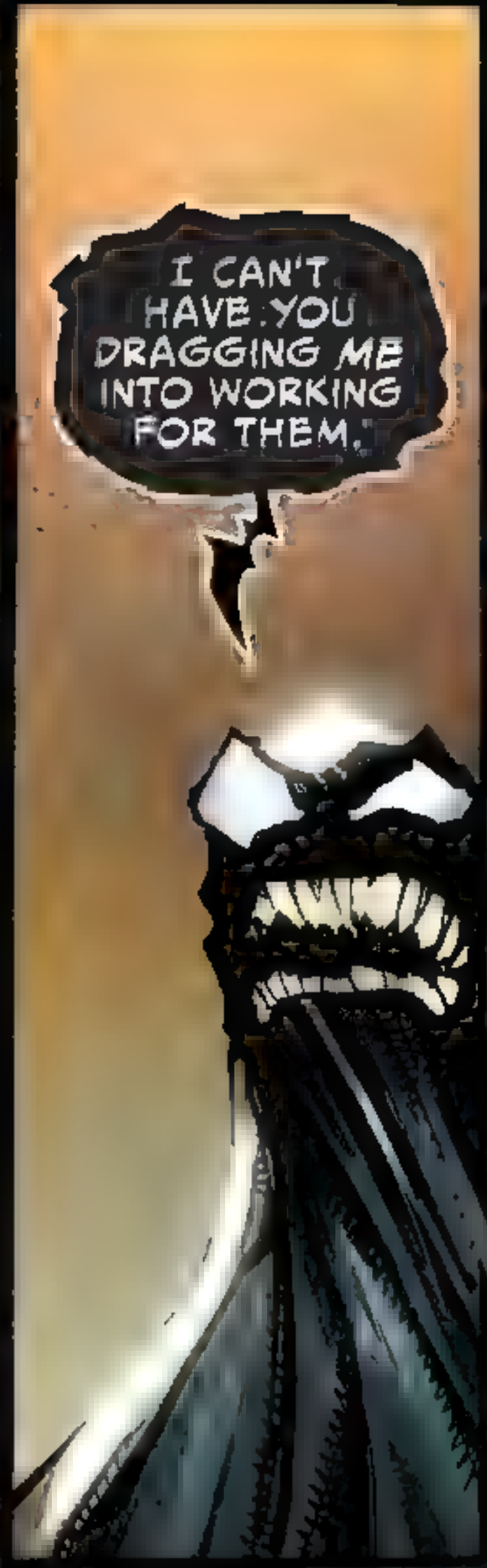
YOU'VE GOT A REPUTATION FOR **PLAYING FAIR**. AND I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD BUY WHATEVER NIGHTMARE TECHNOLOGY YOU HAVE IN THIS BOX.

I CAN'T LET YOU WORK WITH THESE PEOPLE, LEE.

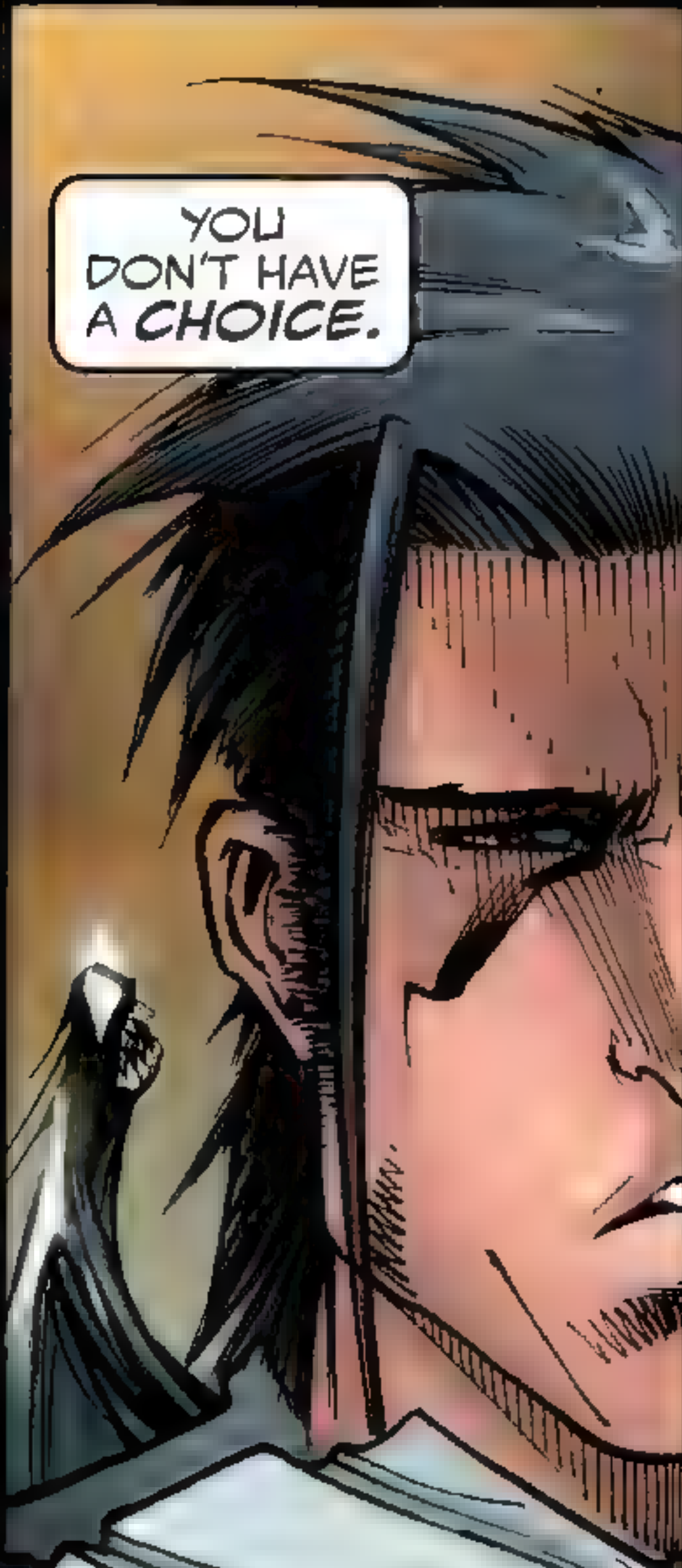


WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT WHATEVER YOU'RE GETTING INTO IS GOING TO GET MESSY. I HAVE...SKILLS THAT COULD BE USEFUL TO YOUR ORGANIZATION.

AND, FRANKLY, I NEED A **JOB**, NOT A ONE-TIME SCORE.



I CAN'T HAVE YOU DRAGGING ME INTO WORKING FOR THEM.



YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.



HM.



YOU'RE A GAMBLER, THAT'S FOR SURE. AND YOU'RE A **SURVIVOR**. I KNOW YOU CAME IN HERE KNOWING THAT WOULD APPEAL TO ME, BECAUSE THAT'S WHO I AM, TOO.

AND YOUR GAMBLE PAID OFF. I NEED MORE MEN LIKE YOU.

YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY CHOICES, LEE. IT'S TRUE, YOU LOCKED ME OUT OF YOUR HIGHER FUNCTIONS.



BUT THERE ARE CERTAIN INVOLUNTARY RESPONSES I CAN PULL THE TRIGGER ON.

GOOD TO HEAR THAT, CAT. I CAN PROMISE YOU--

ULP!



HRAUGH!



WHAT THE HELL...?



SORRY. NERVES.



PLEASE. I DOUBT YOU'VE HAD "NERVES" SINCE YOU WERE TWELVE YEARS OLD ON THE PLAYGROUND.

WHATEVER IT IS, PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER. AND GET THAT BUCKET OUT OF HERE.



YOUR PET **SCORPION** KNOWS HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME.

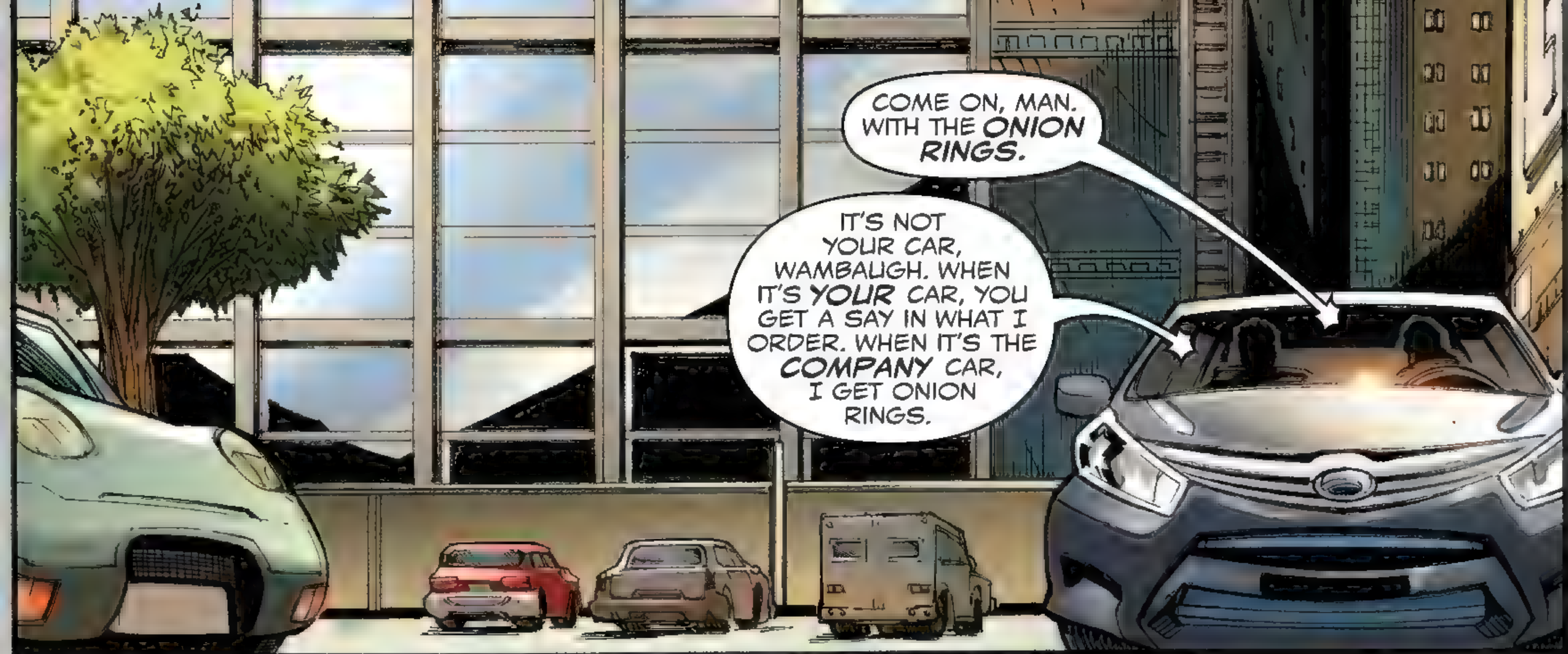


THAT WAS DISGUSTING. I NEED A NEW SUITE. I'M NOT STAYING IN HERE NOW.



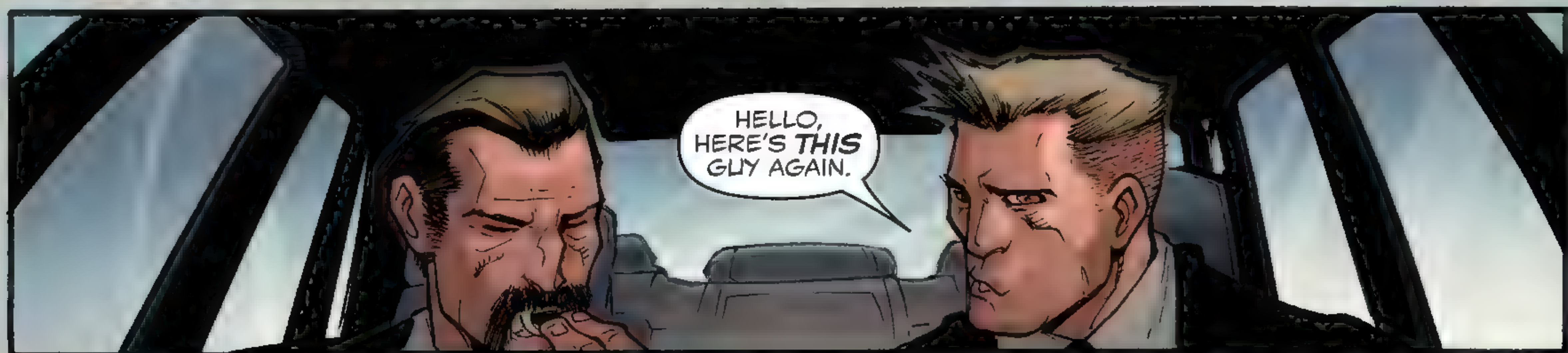
SOMETHING SO FAMILIAR ABOUT THAT GUY...

AND HOW'D HE KNOW I'M **SCORPION**?



COME ON, MAN.
WITH THE **ONION**
RINGS.

IT'S NOT
YOUR CAR,
WAMBAUGH. WHEN
IT'S **YOUR** CAR, YOU
GET A SAY IN WHAT I
ORDER. WHEN IT'S THE
COMPANY CAR,
I GET **ONION**
RINGS.



HELLO,
HERE'S **THIS**
GUY AGAIN.



WAS
HE CARRYING
A BUCKET WHEN
HE WENT
INSIDE?



HE
HAD A **CASE**.
BAGMAN.

FACIAL
RECOGNITION COME
BACK YET?

PARTNER,
I HAVEN'T EVEN PUT
IN THE **REQUEST** YET.
THE GUY JUST WALKED
IN THERE **TWENTY**
MINUTES AGO.



SO...
YOU
THINKING WHAT **I'M**
THINKING?



DON'T **EVER** PULL SOME \$^@# LIKE THAT **AGAIN**. DO YOU UNDERSTAND HOW **DANGEROUS** THAT WAS?

I DOUBT THEY WOULD HAVE **KILLED** YOU FOR REGURGITATING IN THEIR **WASTE-BASKET**, LEE.



NOT FOR ME. FOR THEM.

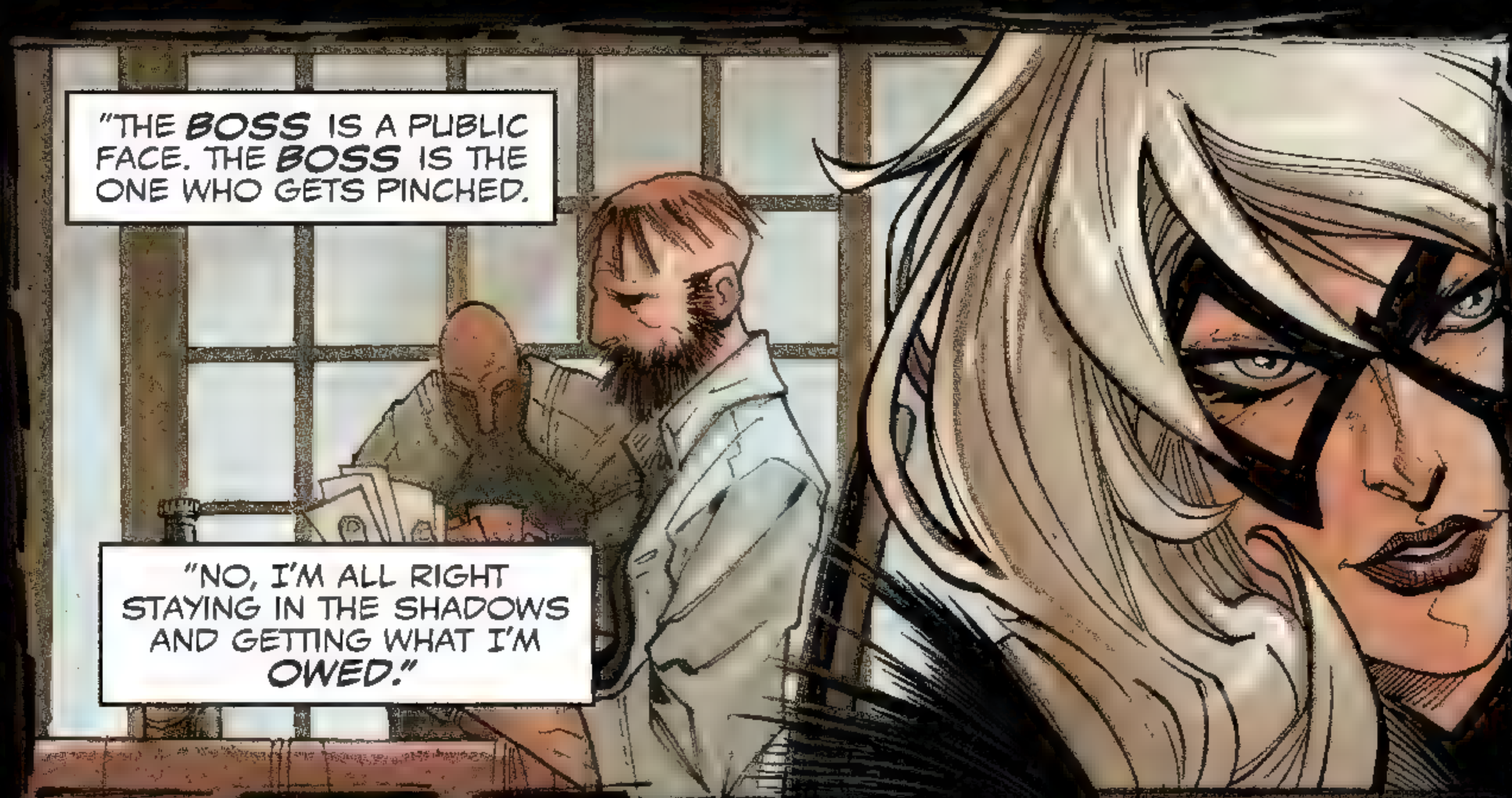
YOU ARE THE BEST ADVANTAGE I HAVE IN ANY SITUATION, BUT **ONLY** IF NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU. YOU ENDANGERED THE LIVES OF **EVERYONE** UP THERE.



AND THEN WHERE WOULD I BE? I'M ON A **LADDER** HERE. YOU KNOW HOW **HARD** IT IS TO GET IN WITH ONE OF THESE CREWS?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... YOU WANT TO BE A **CRIME BOSS** NOW?

NO. NOT THE **BOSS**.



"THE **BOSS** IS A PUBLIC FACE. THE **BOSS** IS THE ONE WHO GETS PINCHED.

"NO, I'M ALL RIGHT STAYING IN THE SHADOWS AND GETTING WHAT I'M **OWED**."



NOW THAT I HAVE YOU, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M **NOT** GONNA DO?

I'M **NOT** GONNA ROB A BANK IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AND MAKE MY GETAWAY IN A CAR WITH MY OWN **FACE** PAINTED ON IT.

I'M **NOT** GONNA GET ON TV AND ANNOUNCE THAT I'M HOLDING THE CITY **HOSTAGE**.

I'M GONNA
DO THIS *SMART*.
INVISIBLE.

I'M NOT GONNA
BE MIXING IT UP WITH
SUPERFREAKS IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE
STREET--

OH, WHAT
THE %&#%\$% IS
THIS?

THIS IS
YOUR *DEATH*,
DELIVERED TO YOU
PERSONALLY BY
FIREBUG!

DID
YOU THINK
TOMBSTONE
WOULD *FORGET*
HIS MEN YOU
MURDERED IN
THAT ALLEY?

WHO? BUDDY,
I REMEMBER *FIREBUG*
FROM WHEN I WAS A KID.
YOU'RE NOT HIM, YOU'RE,
LIKE, *TWENTY-TWO*
YEARS OLD.

YEAH, GUESS
WHAT, GENIUS?
FIREBUG IS A
FRANCHISE NOW. I
PAID *GOOD MONEY*
FOR THIS SUIT
AND NAME.


INCINERATORS ARE *CRAP*
AS WEAPONS, AND THIS
KID IS AN *IDIOT*. TEN-TO-ONE
ALL HE KNOWS HOW TO DO
IS *SPRAY AND PRAY*. WE
CAN *TAKE* HIM.

BUT DON'T
WORRY. I'LL EARN
IT *ALL* BACK WITH THE
CASH I GET FROM
TAKING *YOU*
OUT.

I WILL NOT
HELP YOU TO *HURT*
ANOTHER PERSON,
LEE.

I'M CONFIDENT
YOU'RE ABOUT TO
RETHINK THAT
POSITION.





YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO HAVE SURVEILLANCE VANS FOR THIS?

NO.

YEAH, BEFORE YOUR TIME. WE USED TO HAVE ALL **KINDS** OF RESOURCES. THEN THE MUTANTS CAME AROUND AND SUDDENLY NOBODY'S ALL THAT WORRIED ABOUT ORGANIZED CRIME ANYMORE.

FBI REALLY CARED THAT MUCH ABOUT MUTANTS?

MUTANTS. COSTUMES. GIGANTIC GODLIKE BEINGS FROM ALPHA CENTAURI WANTING TO CRASH THE MOON INTO THE EARTH. WE'RE BASICALLY A LINE ITEM ON THE S.H.I.E.L.D. BUDGET NOW.

WE USED TO RUN **BLACK BAG** ON SUSPECTED MUTANTS, MAN. IT WAS LIKE J. EDGAR'S COMMIE-HUNTING YEARS FOR A WHILE.


YOU USED TO BREAK INTO THE HOUSES OF SUSPECTED MUTANTS?

WELL, I DIDN'T. I WAS RIDING A DESK FILING BRIEFS.

BUT THIS **ONE** OLD-TIMER, HE TELLS ME ABOUT HOW HE'S RUNNING SURVEILLANCE ON THIS WOMAN--SUSPECTED MUTANT. HE'S IN HER PLACE, TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS, AND SHE COMES HOME. **GORGEOUS** WOMAN.

AND HER **MUTANT POWER** IS SHE CAN **STRANGLE** A GUY WITH HER--

WHOA, HEY, ARE YOU SEEING THIS?



YEAH, BOSS.
IT'S DONE. GUY COULD
HARDLY BELIEVE THAT I WAS
THE ONE TO SHOW UP. HE WAS
TERRIFIED, OBVIOUSLY.
MEEK AS A KITTEN--

YAAAAAAAAAAAA!

HOLY
SHIT!

RAAAAGGGHH!



YOU...
TRIED TO **BURN**
USSSSS...

BUT WORSE,
YOU'VE **SEEN**
USSSS...ANYONE
WHO SEES US
MUST DIE!

HALT!

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
YOU ARE, PAL,
BUT I'VE GOT
ENOUGH ORDNANCE
HERE TO DROP
THE **THING!**



FEDERAL AGENT. YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT:



